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C O N F I D E N T I A L HILLAH 000008

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NEW DIWANIYAH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATION SHOWS DAWA, SADR INFLUENCE

REF: HILLAH 007

CLASSIFIED BY: ALFRED FONTENEAU, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, REO, AL-HILLAH, STATE.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) Summary: The Diwaniyah Province delegation to the new National Assembly (NA) will contain seven candidates from the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA, ballot number 555) and one candidate from the Iraqi National List (ballot number 731) according to final provincial results provided by the provincial head of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). The 731 candidate is a well-known liberal. The UIA-affiliated contingent shows strong Dawa and Sadr loyalties. End summary.

2. (C) According to final results offered by Saad Madhlom, the Diwaniyah Head of the IECI, the UIA captured seven of Diwaniyah's eight seats, with the remaining seat going to the 731 list (reftel.) The lead UIA candidate from Diwaniyah is Minister of State for National Security Abdul Kareem Al-Anezi, an Iraqi Dawa-affiliated leader from neighboring Maysan Province.

3. (C) The second UIA candidate is Jaber Abdul Kadhum Salman Al-Zeyadi, a Dawa Party member and close ally of Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari. A member of the Zeyadi tribe, Al-Zeyadi is originally from Diwaniyah but now spends most of his time in Baghdad, local contacts report. The third delegate is Adeeba Musa Al-Shahad, a Sadrist school teacher and current Transitional National Assembly (TNA) member elected to the TNA in January 2005 as a Sadr-affiliated member of the Shi'a Candle List. Al-Shahad is from the Diwaniyah town of Shamiya. Contacts report that Al-Shahad has not been a visible representative or active campaigner, preferring to remain in her home when business permits her to leave Baghdad.

4. (C) The fourth candidate on the UIA slate, Melham Al-Megoter, is perhaps the best-known UIA candidate in Diwaniyah outside of Al-Anezi. A member of a distinguished family described by REO Al-Hillah local staff as "the Kennedys of Diwaniyah," Al-Megoter, lawyer and businessman, is the only independent on the UIA ticket, and according to local contacts the only UIA candidate to campaign on the strength of his own name rather than the UIA umbrella. Al-Megoter is proud of his family's place in Iraqi history. He related that his grandfather accompanied King Faisal, the first King of Iraq, from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to Iraq after the British crowned King Faisal in the post-world War I years. He offered that he had been extended many positions under Saddam Hussein because of his prominent name, but that he had consistently refused because Hussein's regime was, he said, "illegal and illegitimate."

5. (C) In a December 12 meeting with REO Al-Hillah staff, Al-Megoter expressed his confidence regarding the new NA and an animus towards Coalition forces. "I expect the coming parliament to be better than the previous one," he predicted, citing the inclusion of Sunnis as the most important reason. He argued that only Sunni participation in Iraqi politics could reduce insurgent violence. Regarding Coalition Forces, he demanded an apology from the USG for two incidents: one in which, he said, Coalition forces fired on his car, narrowly missing hitting him; and a second incident, more than a year prior to the interview, in which he alleged that his nephew had been killed by Coalition gunfire while driving through Baghdad.

6. (C) The remaining UIA candidates are, according to local staff and contacts, less well-known. The fifth is Salim Jasoor Hasoon, a SCIRI member; the sixth is Kamila Kadhum Mohammed, a member of Al-Fadila Party; and the seventh is Shaheed Hussein Muttar, a Dawa Party member.

7. (C) The 731 candidate is Shaykh Hussein Ali Al-Shalaan, a cousin of former Minister of Defense Hazem Shalaan and the leader of a prominent Diwaniyah tribe. Shalaan is a current TNA member, having been elected in January 2005 as a member of the Allawi slate.

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